

North Carolina Women of Color: Opinions and Concerns about the State Government

Prepared for: Women AdvaNCe

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Client

Women AdvaNCe, a progressive women's rights organization committed to educating women on political issues. The NARAL Pro-Choice NC Foundation sponsors Women AdvaNCe.

Policy Question

What do North Carolina women of color think about the major pieces of legislation that the General Assembly passed in 2013? How do they think it will affect their lives, and how could they be more politically motivated in 2014 and 2016?

Background

North Carolina saw a groundbreaking legislative session in 2013. After the 2012 elections, North Carolina had both a Republican majority in the General Assembly and a Republican in the governor's mansion for the first time since the Reconstruction era. Conservatives saw a unique window of political opportunity, and advanced their choice legislation as soon as the legislative session started in January 2013. The General Assembly voted to cut the maximum amount and duration of unemployment benefits, tighten abortion clinic regulations, and pass the strictest voting rights law in the country. Governor McCrory also pledged to opt out of the Medicaid expansion that would otherwise automatically kick in for all states in 2014.

The majority of these decisions will disproportionately affect North Carolina women. In 2012, unemployment was higher among women than among men, and more than 50 percent of North Carolina's long-term unemployed are women.ⁱ 200,000 uninsured North Carolina women would gain access to healthcare under the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion.ⁱⁱ Women also represent 54 percent of North Carolina voters, but 65 percent of otherwise qualified voters

who lack a photo ID.ⁱⁱⁱ And women are the obvious primary beneficiaries of abortion and women's health clinics.

There is little information on how much the average woman of color knows about these four issues, or how much she thinks they will directly impact her life. Does she worry about abortion access, or about unemployment benefits? Does she think her voting behavior will change to adapt to the new law? And which of these issues could motivate her to become more politically engaged in 2014 and 2016?

Voter ID

Over the last 12 years, North Carolina produced legislation that made it easier and more convenient to vote. The state established a 19-day early voting period in 2000, and instituted same-day registration in 2007. In 2000, North Carolina voter turnout was 50.7 percent, and the state was ranked 37th in the nation for voter participation. By 2012, turnout increased to 64.6 percent, and North Carolina is now ranked 11th in the country.^{iv} In the last general election, more than half of voters used early voting, and two percent of new voters used same-day registration. Female voter turnout increased to 69.7 percent, and women now represent 54 percent of all registered North Carolina voters.^v

In 2013, the state legislature reversed this trajectory and voted to reduce the early voting window from 19 to 10 days, eliminate same-day registration, and institute a strict photo ID requirement. The photo ID requirement will disproportionately affect female voters, who represent 64 percent of otherwise qualified voters who lack a North Carolina photo ID.^{vi} Women of color are even more likely to lack a photo ID. In North Carolina, non-white women represent just 29.52 percent of registered female voters, but 43.52 percent of registered female voters who

lack a photo ID.^{vii} Women of color also made up 36.34 percent of female “one-stop” early voters and 44 percent of women who used same-day registration.^{viii}

There’s a wide body of research available on the effects of voter ID laws and whether they disenfranchise otherwise eligible voters. The breadth of research leads to some contradictory findings. Some studies find that strict voter ID laws lead to a significant drop in voter turnout,^{ix} especially among minority and immigrant voters.^x Others find that other factors, such as political motivations, have a stronger effect on turnout than voter ID.^{xi} However, most research does find that voter ID laws have some effect on voter turnout, and while the effect is typically small, it is perceptible.^{xii} Progressive North Carolina organizations predict that the state’s new law is most likely to disenfranchise black, low-income, and female voters.

Abortion Access

Over the past several years, state legislatures have become more hostile towards reproductive rights. Forty-one states now prohibit abortions after a specified point during pregnancy (seven states mark the point as early as twenty weeks). Twenty-six states have also instated mandatory waiting periods, and many others place burdensome requirements unrelated to patient safety on abortion clinics.^{xiii}

North Carolina’s latest abortion bill, S.B. 353, followed the trend of regulating abortion clinics by requiring they meet the standards of an outpatient surgical center. Critics worry that the new standards will force most of North Carolina’s 16 abortion clinics to close, because they can’t meet the new regulatory standards.^{xiv} The law also includes a sex-selective abortion ban, which outlaws abortions based on the gender of the fetus despite the dearth of evidence of “race and sex selective” abortions.^{xv} This legislation would effectively restrict abortion access,

especially for women of color,^{xvi} without improving their healthcare access or other health outcomes.

North Carolina also gained some national attention for the way this new law moved through the General Assembly. Republican legislators attached the bill first to an anti-sharia bill, and this version was so severe that Governor McCrory publicly stated his intent to veto it if it came to his desk. Lawmakers then attached the second, less restrictive version to a motorcycle safety law – S.B. 353 - which the governor signed.^{xvii} House and Senate committees debated both versions with no public notice. Numerous lawmakers spoke out against the secretive process. One House Judiciary Committee member took to Twitter to share his disapproval, saying “New abortion bill being heard in the committee I am on. The public didn't know. I didn't even know.”^{xviii} Public approval of state government fell shortly after national media began covering the story.^{xix}

According to a 2012 Pew Hispanic study, Latinos are more politically conservative on the abortion issue. 51 percent of Latinos believe that abortion should be illegal.^{xx} This more conservative stance may be linked to Latinos’ strong sense of religious identity – 83 percent claim a religious affiliation, and 61 percent say that religion is very important in their lives.^{xxi}

Unemployment Benefits

The Great Recession hit North Carolina’s workforce particularly hard. At 8 percent, the state unemployment rate still exceeds the national rate (6.7 percent^{xxii}). Two of North Carolina’s biggest industries – manufacturing and textiles – began contracting before the Recession hit, and then suffered the biggest employment losses. This structural unemployment contributes significantly to the overall unemployment rate, and has slowed down North Carolina’s recovery.

In 2012, the unemployment rate for women in North Carolina was 9.6 percent (the rate for men was 8.8 percent)^{xxiii}, and women currently represent more than half of the state’s long-term unemployed.^{xxiv,1}

In 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly voted to reduce the maximum duration and amount of unemployment benefits, citing a high level of debt. They also tightened eligibility rules, which reduced the share of unemployed workers who can access these benefits. For example, the new law disqualifies workers from benefits if they have to leave a job for health reasons or because of “undue family hardship.” This disqualification disproportionately impacts women, who often serve as caretakers in their families. In total, 70,000 long-term unemployed North Carolinians lost all unemployment benefits on June 30, 2013.^{xxv} Critics argue that cutting unemployment benefits will have a negative effect on the economy, because people who are looking for jobs won’t be able to support themselves or contribute to productivity.

Only 22 percent of black women report being “very worried” about losing their job, which may speak to this study’s subjects’ lack of interest in North Carolina’s new unemployment benefits. On the other hand, 39 percent of black women reported being “very worried” about providing a good education for their children, and 78 percent believe that getting a good education and working hard matters most for “getting ahead in life today.”^{xxvi}

Medicaid/Health Care Access

The Affordable Care Act includes a provision to expand Medicaid coverage in each state. On January 1 2014, this expansion relaxed eligibility requirements to cover a broader base of

¹ The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the long-term unemployed as those who have been looking for work for over 12 months. This does not include the “discouraged” unemployed, who have dropped out of the labor force.

people. More than 760,000 women and girls in North Carolina lack any kind of health insurance.^{xxvii} If North Carolina had expanded, 200,000 of these women and girls would be newly eligible for Medicaid.^{xxviii}

However, this provision is optional, so each state can choose not to expand coverage. As of January 2014, 25 states (including North Carolina) have rejected the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion.^{xxix} Last fall, Governor McCrory rejected calls to open a special legislative session to reverse the decision to opt out, saying "a special session to further expand Obamacare in North Carolina is out of the question."^{xxx} Half a million North Carolinians continue to go without affordable health insurance.

According to a recent Elon University poll, only 29 percent of North Carolinians believe the Affordable Care Act will "make things better;" 50 percent of respondents believe it will "make things worse."^{xxxi}

Data and Methods

I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to investigate how much North Carolina women of color knew about the state government's recent legislative actions, and how they thought it would affect them. The bulk of quantitative data came from Public Policy Polling, a Raleigh-based polling firm that provides extensive and comprehensive state-wide polling data. They conducted approval ratings for the North Carolina legislature and governor, and polled North Carolinians on controversial 2013 legislation. They use automated telephone interviews, and their sample comprises 600 North Carolinians. The phone interviews collect information on the respondents' gender, political party, political leaning (liberal, moderate, conservative), age, and area code.

To supplement these data and get a more complete picture, I also conducted one-on-one interviews with women of color across North Carolina. The interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, and covered the respondents' recent voting activity, political and social issues they cared most about, and feelings about legislation in the 2013 session. I also asked whether they planned to vote for the same legislators at the next election, whether they thought new laws would affect them on a personal level, and whether there was one particular action that changed their view of the state government. (A copy of the interview instrument is attached.)

The interview sample included nineteen women. Ten of the women identified as black, eight identified as Latina, and one identified as half-Latina. At the time of their interviews, five women were between 18 and 25 years old, eight between 26 and 34, and six were above 40. Six respondents were completing a college or graduate degree, while the rest had full-time jobs. The respondents represented the following counties: Chatham, Durham, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, Pasquotank, and Wake. Nine respondents were single, three were in a relationship, six were married, and one was widowed. All but one respondent had either completed or were working towards a four-year college degree; one respondent had completed a two-year degree. All but one respondent were registered Democrats, and one was registered as an Independent. All but one had most recently voted in the 2012 election.

Table 1		Characteristics of the participants				
Age	18-25 5 (26%)	26-34 8 (42 %)	35-42 0 (0%)	42+ 6 (32%)		
Marital Status	Single 9 (47%)	In a relationship 3 (16%)	Married/ Co-habitating 6 (32%)	Separated/ Divorced 0 (0%)	Widowed 1 (5%)	
Education	Some college/2-year degree 3 (16%)	4-year college degree 13 (68%)	Some graduate/professional school 3 (16%)	Graduate or professional degree 0 (0%)		
Race/Ethnicity	White 0 (0%)	Black/African-American 10 (53%)	Hispanic/Latina 8 (42%)	Another race/ethnicity 1 (5%)		
Political Party	Democrat 18 (95%)	Republican 0	Libertarian 0	Green 0	Independent 1 (5%)	

Limitations

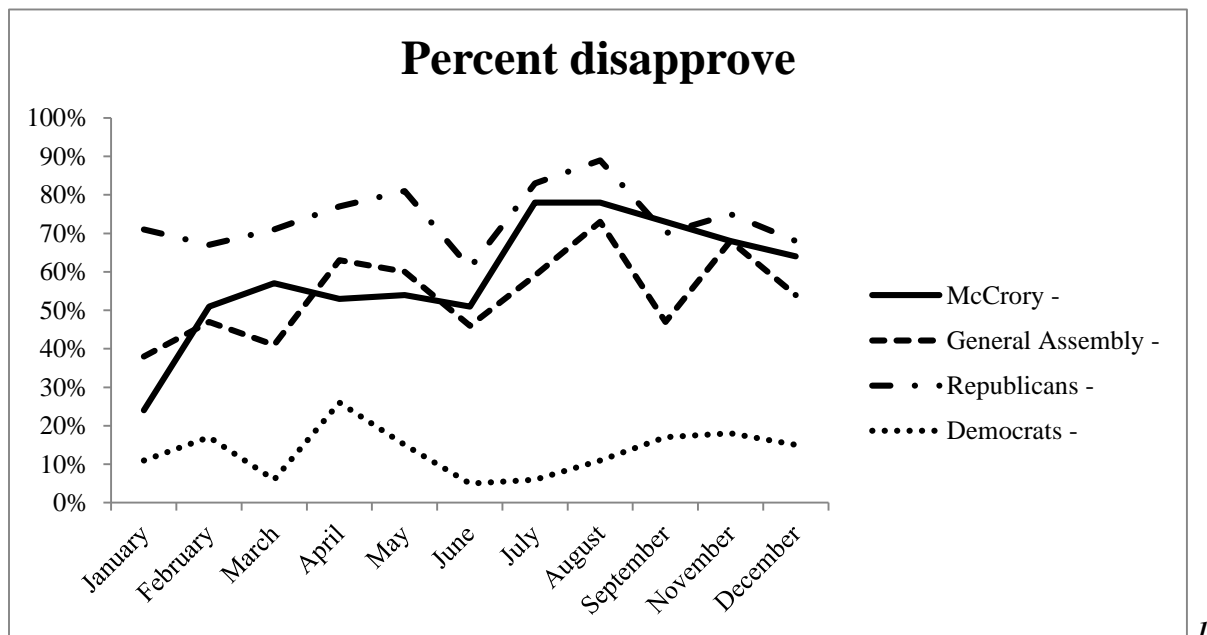
The interview sample size of 19 is small enough that results cannot be generalized for all black and Latina women in North Carolina. The sample also skews more educated than the average black or Latina woman. Since the vast majority of interview subjects were Democrats, this study lacks the Republican woman of color's perspective on the state government. Finally, this study only accepted interview subjects who were registered to vote, and therefore only includes women who are civic-minded enough to register and vote regularly.

Public Policy Polling's data comes from 87-159 polled black women in North Carolina. They did not have enough Latina respondents to create a representative sample. The margins of error on their results for black women range from +/- 7.8 to +/- 12.5 percent.

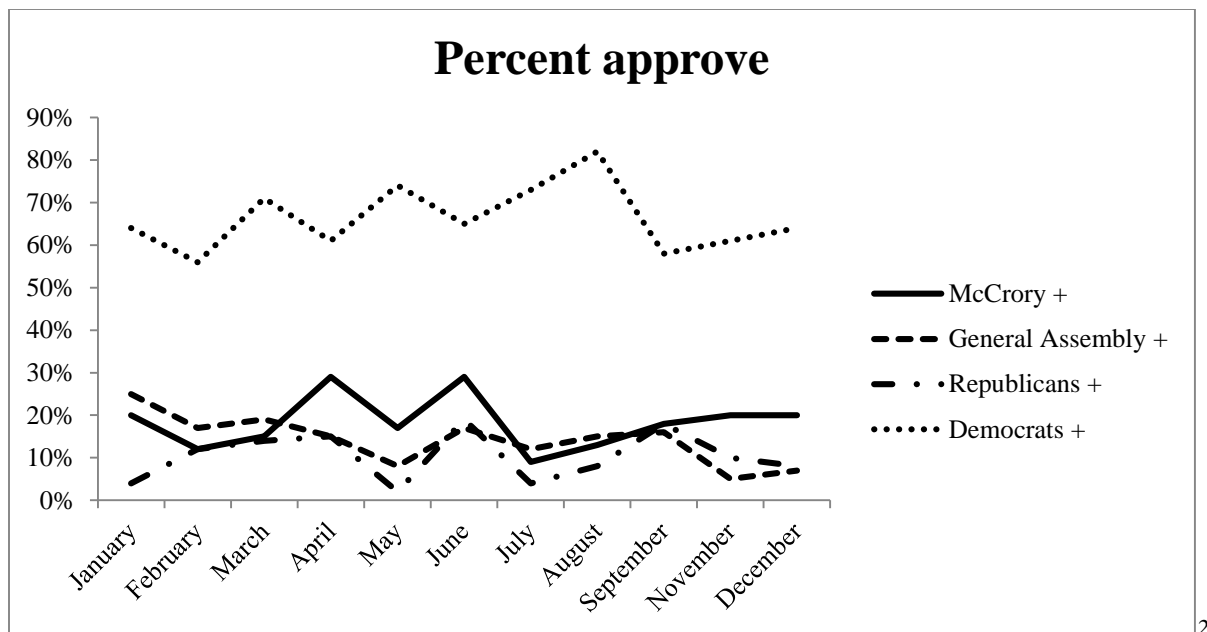
Results

Polling Results

Black women's disapproval of the state government peaked in the summer of 2013, though their disapproval of state Republicans remained relatively high throughout the year. While Governor McCrory's disapproval rating has fallen since August 2013, the fact that it remains above 60 percent indicates that he has lost black women's support in the long term.



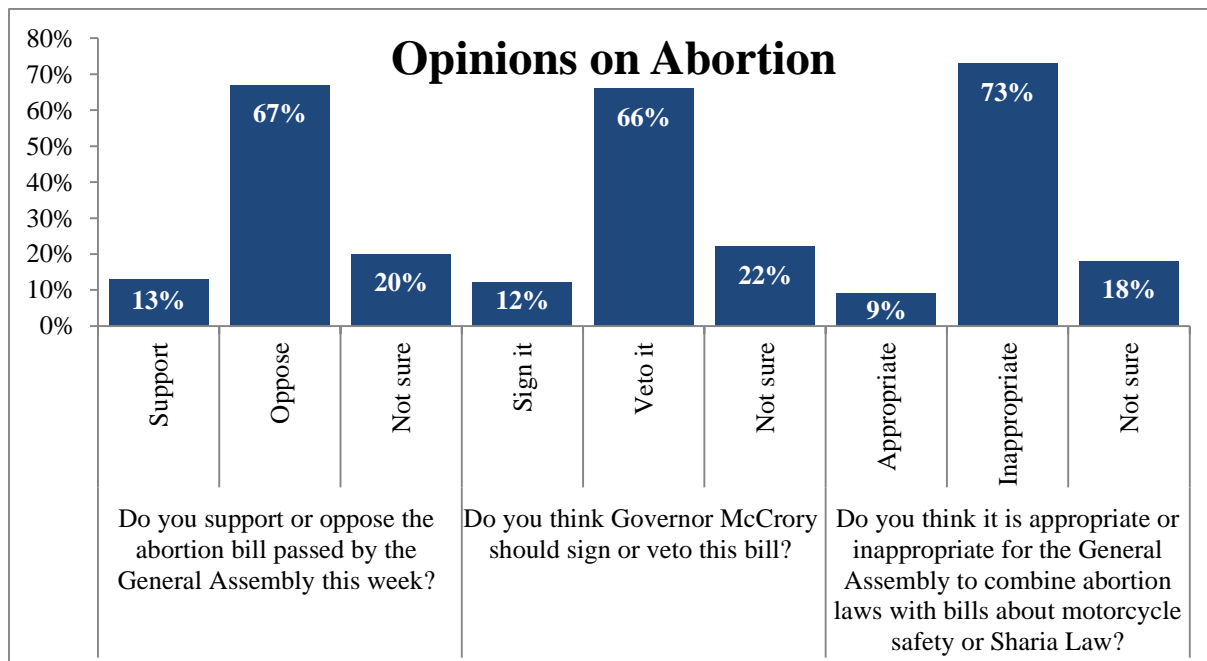
Disapproval ratings among black women. Source: Public Policy Polling.



Approval ratings among black women. Source: Public Policy Polling.

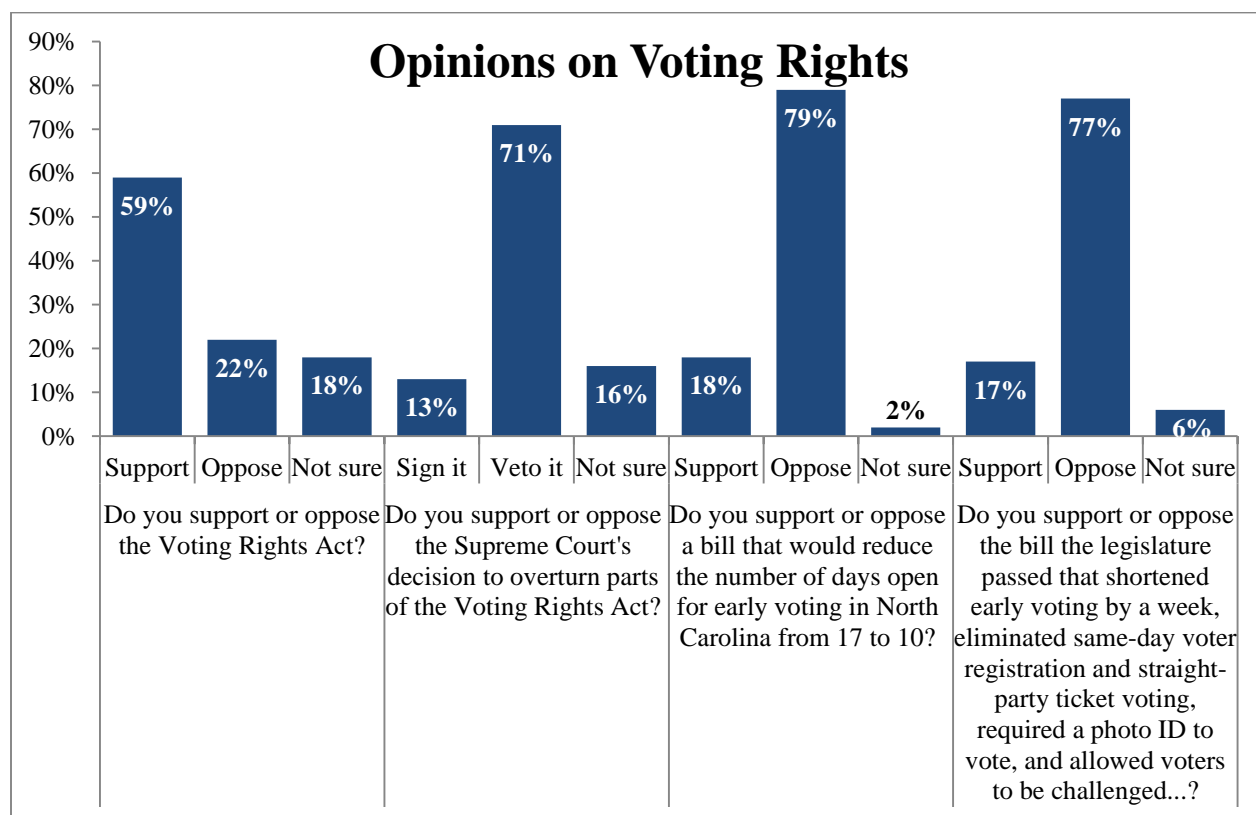
Abortion

The majority of black women in North Carolina opposed the new abortion bill that the General Assembly passed in July, though more opposed the fact that legislators attached the bill to motorcycle safety and Sharia Law legislation.



Voting Rights

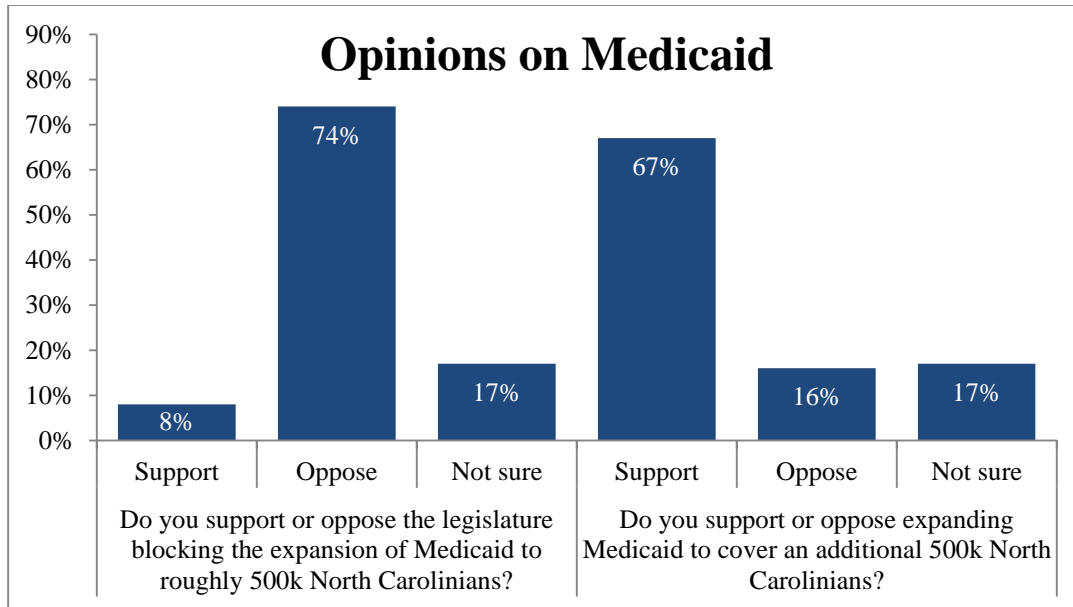
The vast majority of black women opposed North Carolina's new voting bill, especially the section that reduced early voting. Even though a smaller majority of them said they supported the Voting Rights Act, roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ opposed the Supreme Court decision that made North Carolina's new law possible.



4 Black women's opinions on voting rights. Source: Public Policy Polling.

Medicaid

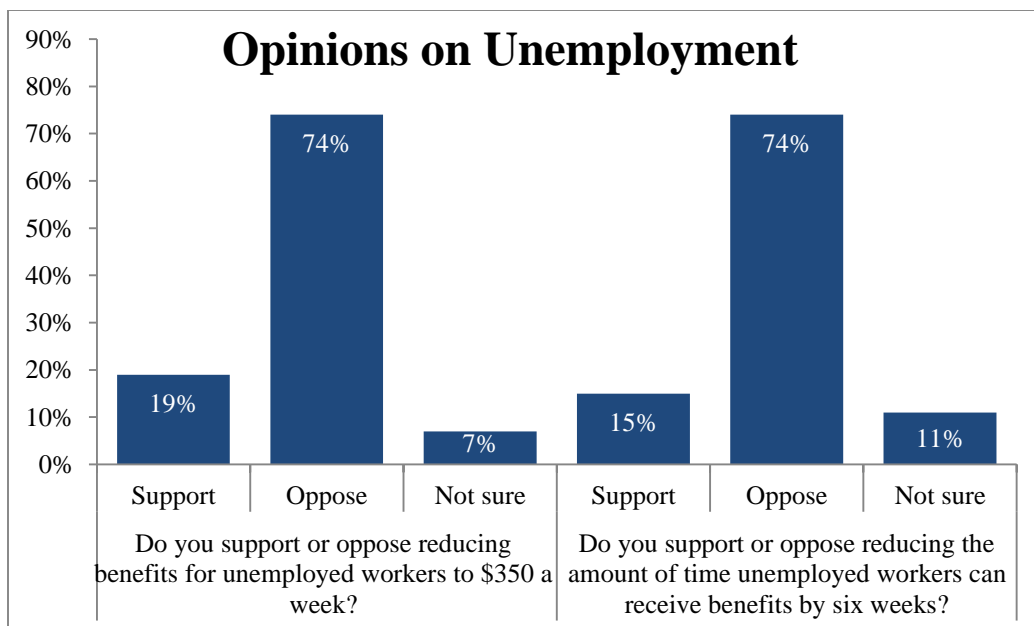
Slightly more black women oppose blocking Medicaid expansion than support actually expanding Medicaid, though a large majority still support expanding it.



5 Black women's opinions on Medicaid expansion. Source: Public Policy Polling.

Unemployment

Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of black women oppose reducing the amount and duration of unemployment benefits in North Carolina.



6 Black women's opinions on unemployment. Source: Public Policy Polling.

Interviews

In general, respondents expressed serious concern for the state's future. "It's really getting hard out here to live a quality life," one woman admitted. All respondents mentioned their race, and how new laws would affect their racial group. "Morale is just low."

"We spend more time complaining instead of realizing that most of the laws that are made directly affect [us]," worried one. "As a woman of color, the laws that are being made concern me greatly. As a Christian woman of color even more."

One Pasquotank County resident said, "What saddens me is the fact that people of color don't vote or feel their voice counts." Some of the respondents themselves fit her description, and did not express hope that they would change anything. "You just have to accept it and try to do the best you can," said one Durham resident.

The women represented a wide range of political engagement, but all of them were troubled by the state government action they knew about. "I feel like there's a lot of things that happened in NC that aren't constitutional," one respondent said.

Education

The most common response from black women to the open-ended question "What do you remember hearing the most about the state government in the past year?" was education, which was not one of this report's chosen topics. Issues mentioned under "education" ranged from teacher pay to tenure to school reform, and all the comments supported teachers and chastised the state government.

“[Teachers] haven’t gotten a pay cut, but they haven’t been paid more than one or two percent raises in the last five years, so that’s a huge issue for public teachers in the state,” said one respondent. “Teachers don’t feel like North Carolina cares about them at all.” Governor McCrory announced in 2013 that he would push to raise entry-level teacher pay, but the conservative state legislature is unlikely to support a measure that would cost the state \$200 million.^{xxxii}

Many respondents had a personal connection to the education issue. They were either educators themselves, or knew a public school teacher. This position really shaped their perspective on the issue. “As an educator, this is where the most damage has been done. I am an assistant principal and disgusted about how people that represent districts are making decisions that will impact schools for my grandchildren,” said a respondent from Pasquotank County. “[Teachers] spend countless amounts of money on supplies for their students, time creating and designing lessons that engage them, and using technology that is non-existent. But they don’t complain about the fact that they haven’t received a raise or step increase in six years. Nor do they complain about the year that money was taken from them to make payroll for that fiscal year.” The average teacher in Pasquotank County earns \$39,110 a year, or about \$3,261 a month.^{xxxiii}

One Durham County resident complained, “There’s just not enough pay. I know a single mother with 2 kids, one is 15 and one is 9. She told me that in the summertime, she has to tell her growing son not to eat too much food, because you’re only getting paid – she’s been in the system for 10 years and she’s on the entry level pay rate, which I think is \$2,450 a month for two kids and herself.” In North Carolina, entry-level teachers earn \$2,566.67 a month. Their annual

salary is \$30,800 for 10 months of work.^{xxxiv} For a family of three, that puts this teacher within 138 percent of the federal poverty line.^{xxxv}

Another related a story about her family member, who is also a teacher. “I have an aunt who’s been teaching in NC for 32 years, and she can’t afford to retire. She has been a public school instructor for 32 years. She’s 57 years old, and cannot retire, and doesn’t plan on retiring... Teachers cannot live, really. There’s a lot of turnover.”

Between 2002 and 2012, North Carolina decreased teacher salaries by almost 16 percent. (The median decline for the other 49 states in the same time was 1 percent.) Today, North Carolina teachers make \$10,000 below the national average, and the state is ranked 46th in teacher pay.^{xxxvi} And in 2013, the General Assembly voted to cut the salary increase that teachers with a master’s degree used to earn, to eliminate teacher tenure in favor of a merit-based contract system, and cut almost 4,000 teacher assistant jobs.^{xxxvii}

Black and other non-white North Carolinians make up 17.4 percent of all teachers, and 36.6 percent of teacher assistants. 31.2 percent of public school students are black, while 10.7 percent are Hispanic.^{xxxviii} Within the black community, teaching has historically been seen as a valuable and elite profession. Based on this paper’s interviews, it makes sense from a cultural perspective that black women would have strong feelings about cuts to education and especially to teacher pay. Black families in North Carolina are also typically less economically mobile, and therefore less able to move their children to a different school if they feel high-quality teachers are leaving.

Voter ID

The majority of respondents also organically mentioned North Carolina's new voter ID laws. Every woman who discussed voter ID discussed the racial implications of the new law, and all agreed that the law would disproportionately affect black voters. "It's going to disenfranchise a lot of voters - a lot of them are, to be honest, minorities. It's going to affect them." One Durham County woman admitted she didn't know any of the details, but said "I just remember that they were trying to suppress black voters...all I know is, it was bad." A Chatham County woman said "I don't know that it's intentional, but I think sometimes with oppressed groups it's very easy not to think about how it's going to affect them." Another respondent expressed concern that not enough people are informed about the new voting law, and that the government wouldn't try to inform them. "I don't think [informing people] is the government's priority...They're more concerned with cutting taxes and doing things like that." All of the respondents argued that the state government wouldn't overturn the law without federal action, such as rewriting the Voting Rights Act.

Younger respondents were more likely to mention how college students would be affected by the new voter ID law. The three youngest respondents specifically mentioned their own college voting experiences and how the new law will shut out otherwise politically or socially engaged students. "The actual process with college students now, with the fact that college students can't use their college IDs to vote...now it's the issue of getting the ID, which takes time and money. Are students really going to take advantage of that? You're going to lose a lot of voters."

Latina subjects were more likely to report voting rights as the most pressing of the four issues. The photo ID requirement was the most important to them of all the voting changes that

came about in the last year. One woman said that requiring a photo ID indicated that the government didn't trust its citizens anymore. "It will violate the trust...and I don't know if that's what [citizens] want to hear." However, one respondent said that identification had never been a problem for her, since she emigrated from a country that required photo ID to vote and it had been a habit for her for a long time. Another said she expected that other groups would be more affected by the new voting law than Latinos. "I think African Americans and Native Americans are right to be worried about access with things like a photo ID," she said. The data bear her intuition out – African-American women are disproportionately less likely to lack a photo ID, more so than other non-white groups in North Carolina.^{xxxix}

Health

Every respondent who mentioned healthcare and Medicaid expansion had a personal story about health insurance. Each of these women either knew someone who had been denied care because he or she lacked insurance, or had insufficient insurance themselves. One woman said, "My great-aunt was stung by a bee, and she's very allergic. My parents took her to urgent care, and they wouldn't even see her at urgent care, because she didn't have insurance. So they had to take her back home. Fortunately, she recovered...but that's something to really think about. People having these health issues, and [a doctor] saying 'I can't see you, I can't help you at all.'" According to a 2014 Harvard University study, North Carolina would save between 455 and 1,145 lives if it opted in to Medicaid expansion, and have 14,776 fewer people suffering "catastrophic medical expenditures."^{xl}

They all supported Medicaid expansion, and lamented Governor McCrory's decision not to expand. "Opting not to expand [Medicaid], even though we weren't going to have to pay for it anyway... In my mind, it seems – why wouldn't you do that?"

One woman voiced her concerns about how the lack of Medicaid expansion would affect the black community. “I guess what concerns me most is that it’s going to affect a lot of disenfranchised groups, and in North Carolina, those disenfranchised groups look a lot like me. The state is diversifying, but where I’m from, I feel like it’s still very black and white.”

The women agreed that this decision would have widespread negative effects. “I don’t think it’s going to affect me personally, but I see a lot of people that it will affect. I live around people that it will affect. I have a lot of friends who...go to work every day and get an hourly wage, but still don’t have enough to take care of their families. I see how detrimental some of these effects are going to be.”

Abortion and Reproductive Rights

Only three respondents mentioned reproductive rights as an area of concern. One black woman linked reproductive rights to health care, which was an issue of serious concern for her. Her parents’ health insurance does not cover her birth control, and while she can absorb the financial costs, she knows many women who can’t. “You think about people who might not be able to pay that extra \$40 a month, or who really need [birth control], so maybe they could stop having these kids all the time!” One Latina respondent noted that she saw similar things happening across the country. “Here and Texas are the most extreme, but a bunch of states are going in that direction now too. It’s really scary.” Again, religion may play a role in these respondents’ lack of awareness or interest in North Carolina reproductive rights. Although the abortion rate for black women is almost five times as high as white women’s, and the Latina abortion rate is twice as high as white women’s, women of color are less likely to report strong support for abortion rights.^{xli}

Unemployment Benefits

None of the respondents organically brought up unemployment benefits, although most of them expressed familiarity with the recent change to benefits when prompted. This is likely because all of the respondents were either employed full-time or were full-time students, so cuts to unemployment haven't affected them directly. It might also indicate that there was more media coverage about voter ID laws and teacher salary than about unemployment, which didn't dominate headlines as much. National polls also show that black and Latina women are less concerned about employment than they are about education and health,^{xiii} which these respondents reflected.

Policy Recommendations

The two issues that black and Latina women organically identify as most important to them are education and voting rights. These are the two issues that it will be most productive to engage with them over.

Education

Women AdvaNCe should vigorously pursue a pro-education platform. In order to adequately support North Carolina families and communities, the state government must invest in high-quality K-12 education. The bulk of this investment should go towards attracting and retaining committed, high-quality educators, so that North Carolina public schools can reduce their teacher turnover rates and establish consistency. Black women will likely support increasing entry-level teacher pay, and a more frequent pay increase schedule. Teachers would be more likely to stay in the public school system, could better support themselves and their families, and would in turn feel more supported by their state government.

Women AdvaNCe could also support stronger financial and non-financial incentives for teachers to work in typically underserved areas and communities. High-quality public schools are largely concentrated in counties like Mecklenburg and Orange, while majority-black areas like New Hanover County get left behind.

Finally, Women AdvaNCe should reach out to teachers in these underserved communities and ask them to engage in community voter registration. Black women in particular should respond to teachers from their families' and friends' schools asking them to become more politically or socially engaged, especially if they talk to them about public education. This way,

teachers will feel more supported by their communities, and black women will feel a stronger sense of efficacy by seeing who their vote could potentially help.

Voter ID

Unfortunately, the average person can't do very much to change the new voter ID law. However, Women AdvaNCe can change how people respond to the law by increasing awareness and voter registration. Common Cause is currently researching the best ways to reach college students who will be affected by the state's new voting restrictions. They would be an excellent partner in awareness efforts, which will be necessary in both 2014 and 2016.

The people who most need information on how to vote going forward – low-income black voters – don't have all the information they need. Women AdvaNCe must take an active role in disseminating the correct information about voting changes in 2014 and 2016. Some of the AdvaNCe Teams could be focused exclusively on this task.

Women AdvaNCe should also reach out more to the religious community. In 2012, the Washington Post and Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a nationwide survey of African-American women. The survey found that 74 percent of black women feel that living a religious life is very important to them.^{xliii} (The average across all adults was 52 percent.) Additionally, 87 percent of black women say that "religion or faith in God" plays a very important role in helping them get through rough times. A Pew Hispanic Trends survey also found that religion plays a very important role in Latinos' lives – 83 percent of Latinos claim a religious affiliation, and 61 percent say that religion is very important in their lives.^{xliv} This religious identity shapes and informs political ideology, and is an important key to understanding women of color and their opinions.

A number of the respondents mentioned their faith and how it shapes their political and social engagement. One woman said that the state government's actions worry her "as a Christian woman of color." That sense of religious identity is inextricable from a social identity for most women of color. Creating church-based AdvaNCe teams could increase black women's awareness of Women AdvaNCe and the information you want to give them. It would also give Women AdvaNCe access to communities who might otherwise not be as trusting or engaged with your message. Similarly, creating school- or district-based AdvaNCe teams could also engage communities of teachers and parents. Finally, further investigation into North Carolina women's religious identity and how it shapes their political engagement and ideology would help target your efforts with the religious community.

Interview Instrument

Introduction

Let me begin by thanking you for taking the time to speak with me today. I am a graduate student at the Duke Sanford School of Public Policy and I am conducting this interview as part of my master's project. I'm interested in learning about how North Carolina women feel about some of the major laws and decisions that came out of the state government in the past year, and whether those laws will affect their lives. You may have heard a lot some of the bills, and nothing at all about others – I'm really interested in the whole range.

Our discussion will last about 30 minutes. Everything we discuss will remain strictly confidential. If at any point you feel uncomfortable discussing a certain topic, just let me know and we will move on. I'm taping the interview, but if you would like me to turn off the tape recorder at any time, just let me know. Do you have any questions? Okay, let's begin.

Warm Up Questions

1. Tell me about the last political news story you remember.
 - a. What was it about the story that caught your attention?
2. What do you remember hearing about the state government in the past year?
 - a. Did any story in particular catch your attention? Tell me a little about it.
 - b. Why was this story so interesting to you?
3. Which of the following issues do you remember hearing the most about: unemployment insurance, Medicaid, voting rights, and abortion.
 - a. What interested you about it?

Module 1 - Unemployment Insurance

My next few questions are about unemployment benefits.

1. What did you hear in the past year about the changes to unemployment benefits?
2. If the state government voted to reduce unemployment benefits, how do you think that would affect you personally?

- a. What if they voted to increase unemployment benefits? How would that affect you personally?

Module 2 – Voting Rights

Switching topics a little, I'd like to talk to you about voting. One of the last laws the General Assembly passed was a new voting rights law.

1. What do you remember hearing about voting laws in North Carolina?
2. The law reduced early voting, ended same-day registration, and made photo IDs mandatory at the voting booth. How do you think your voting habits will change once the new law takes effect?
3. How do you think it will affect North Carolinians' voting habits?

Module 3 – Abortion

Ok, we are more than halfway done! All of your thoughts have been really helpful. I'd like to change topics again and talk a little about abortion.

1. What did you hear about state lawmakers and abortion in the past year?
2. Did what you heard affect your opinion of the state government at all?

Module 4 – Medicaid/Healthcare Module

Now I want to ask you about Medicaid and health insurance.

1. What did you hear in the past year about the state government and Medicaid?
2. Part of the Affordable Care Act includes an optional Medicaid expansion for each state. States can choose to opt out, so their Medicaid coverage will stay the same. Do you think North Carolina should opt in, or opt out? *Why?*
 - a. Which option do you think North Carolina will choose? *Why?*

Module 5 – Wrap-up

1. The next time you vote, do you think any of these issues will affect the candidate or party you support?
2. Will any of these issues affect the way your family and friends in North Carolina vote?
3. After talking about all of these issues, what are your thoughts on the state government?
4. Do you have any other thoughts about these bills, or the state government, that you want to add?

Demographic questions:

I just have a couple of demographic questions for you

1. How old are you?
2. What is your marital status?
 - ☐ Single
 - ☐ In a relationship
 - ☐ Married/Living with a partner
 - ☐ Separated/Divorced
 - ☐ Widowed
3. What is the highest level of school that you completed?
 - ☐ Elementary school
 - ☐ Some high school
 - ☐ High school graduate/GED
 - ☐ Some college/two-year degree
 - ☐ Four-year college degree
 - ☐ Some graduate or professional school
 - ☐ Graduate or professional school

4. What best describes your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Non-Hispanic White
- ☐ Non-Hispanic Black
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Another race/ethnicity

5. Which party or movement do you most closely identify with?

- ☐ Democrat
- ☐ Republican
- ☐ Libertarian
- ☐ Green
- ☐ Other:

6. When was the last time you voted?

Ok, that concludes our discussion. Again, I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me. Our conversation was very informative. If you think of any comments you would like to add to our discussion, you can reach me by email at marion.johnson@duke.edu, or by phone at 704.650.8025.

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